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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7297
INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEHJS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1709
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1266
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2123

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 003335

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DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS
NSC FOR E.PHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/06/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [PINR](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: NEW ARMED FORCES CHIEF: PROFESSIONAL, REFORMER,
FRIENDLY TO U.S.

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4(b-d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Amid some political jousting, Indonesia's legislature confirmed Army Chief of Staff Gen. Djoko Santoso as the new Chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces on December ¶5. Santoso--President Yudhoyono's nominee for the position--pledged to work to continue to professionalize the military. He is regarded as an effective leader and as a reformer with a clean record who favors engagement with the U.S. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) SBY'S CHOICE: Army Chief of Staff Gen. Djoko Santoso was confirmed by the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR) on December 5 as the new chief (Panglima) of the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI). Santoso's appointment had been expected for some time and he was the sole nominee put forward by President Yudhoyono on November 28. He replaces Air Marshal Djoko Suyanto, who is retiring. Santoso's review by the DPR's Commission I on Foreign and Security Affairs offered opportunity for critical comment (see below) but ended in general approval of the nominee. The swearing in should happen in the next week or two.

¶3. (SBU) PROFESSIONAL MILITARY: Santoso, 55, was highly articulate during his confirmation testimony. He said his goal was the creation of a modern, politically neutral, professional force that could protect the country from threats, increase popular affection for the military and improve soldiers' welfare. He undertook to complete the reform of TNI culture and to manage the TNI's budget better. He commented that professionalism in the Indonesian context meant not only tactics and control but its identity as a "people's" and a national army. Santoso made similar remarks in 2005 upon his appointment as Army Chief of Staff.

¶4. (SBU) DPR HITS OUT: The confirmation process offered opportunity for critical comment on outgoing Panglima Suyanto's performance and the voicing of expectations for Santoso's term. One legislator enjoined the TNI to remain out of politics, resolve outstanding procurement disputes with the DPR and remain subordinate to civilian authority. Several members also faulted outgoing Panglima Suyanto for not improving the military's professionalism and soldiers' welfare and for failing to produce a general defense policy, a defense doctrine or a white book on the military's status. Critics noted that the TNI Law of 2002 and the National

Defense Law of 2004 stipulated the issuance of a national defense policy, which was to serve as the basis for defense planning, implementation and supervision. Suyanto received high marks, however, for his quick and objective response to the shooting of four civilians in Pasuruan, East Java, in May 2007.

15. (SBU) CLEAN RECORD: Santoso has worked closely with Yudhoyono in the past, including as SBY's deputy in the Jakarta Military Command and at TNI headquarters. He also has remained free of allegations of wrongdoing. Santoso has spent most of his career in the Army's Strategic Reserve Command (KOSTRAD), becoming Chief of Staff of various regional military commands and commander of KOSTRAD's Second Division between 2000 and 2003. He is credited with restoring peace to the troubled Maluku islands in 2002, and he received good marks as Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army for leading the GOI's relief effort in Aceh after the 2004 tsunami. He became Chief of Staff of the Army in February

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2005. Santoso was born in Solo, Central Java, on September 8, 1952. Santoso was born in Solo, Central Java, on September 8, 1952. He is married and has two children.

16. (C) ENGAGEMENT WITH U.S.: Suyanto's personal charm was invaluable to improving the perception of the TNI to outsiders. Santoso understands English fairly well, though he is reluctant to speak it. Typically Javanese, Santoso is very reserved and does not outwardly reveal his emotions to outsiders. He is intelligent, has a sense of vision, and favors engagement with the United States. He seems to be an effective leader with the personal relationships and the political savvy needed to carry out his plans to modernize and professionalize the TNI.

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